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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000284

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [JA](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY/JAPAN: PM KOIZUMI'S MAKES LONG-AWAITED
VISIT TO TURKEY

Classified By: Political Counselor Janice G. Weiner for reasons 1.4 (b,
d).

Summary

1. (C) Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi paid a four-day official visit to Ankara and Istanbul January 9-12, the first by a Japanese head of government since 1990. While the visit was largely symbolic, the two sides discussed common approaches to the Iran nuclear issue, Iraq reconstruction, and the Middle East Peace Process. The GOT asked for Japanese support on Cyprus, brought up the reported presence of PKK in Japan, and complained about the growing trade imbalance in Japan's favor. While in Istanbul, Koizumi visited the Japanese-funded Bosphorus tunnel now under construction and other Japanese investments. End summary.

Regional Issues

2. (C) According to Turkish MFA and Japanese embassy sources, the two sides were in general agreement concerning Iran, Iraq, Syria/Lebanon and the Middle East Peace Process. Both agreed on the need to coax Iran back into a dialogue on its nuclear activities with the IAEA and EU-3. (Comment. The visit occurred as it was becoming clear that the EU-3 initiative was dead. End comment). According to the Japanese embassy, Koizumi asked the GOT to use its influence with Iran in this direction. On Syria, the two sides agreed Damascus should cooperate fully with the UNIIIC investigation. Japanese and Turkish officials also mooted the possibility of joint reconstruction projects in Iraq. The GOT asked Japan to consider providing equipment for a Baghdad hospital that Turkey intends to rebuild; Koizumi agreed to look into joint projects that take advantage of Turkey's proximity and expertise.

3. (C) Turning to the Middle East, Turkish officials briefed Koizumi on the agreement FM Gul signed with Israel and the Palestinian Authority on January 4 whereby a Turkish consortium would revive and manage the Erez Industrial Zone in Gaza (septel). Turkey reportedly asked Japan to consider "moral and financial support" to the Erez project in the context of existing Japanese reconstruction projects in Gaza. With both sides enjoying good relations with Israel and the Palestinians, they agreed to consult further on ways to contribute to MEPP.

PKK in Japan

4. (C) MFA Japan Section Chief Erdem Mutaf told us Prime Minister Erdogan raised with Koizumi the reported presence of representatives of the Kurdish terrorist organization PKK (also known as KADEK or Kongra-Gel) in Japan, reminding Koizumi that the PKK is internationally listed as a terrorist organization. Koizumi reportedly agreed to investigate the PKK presence in Japan further with a view to consulting with Turkey more extensively in the coming months.

Cyprus

5. (C) Turkish officials asked for Japanese support for Turkey's position on Cyprus, suggesting that Koizumi was briefed to some extent on the GOT's latest proposals, submitted to UN Secretary General Annan, to break the Cyprus deadlock. MFA and Japanese embassy sources both told us Koizumi was non-committal, noting that Japan does not "embargo" the TRNC and remains supportive of UN efforts to resolve the Cyprus dispute.

Trade and Investment Issues

6. (C) Turkish officials also raised their concerns about the growing trade imbalance in Japan's favor. Tourism officials from both sides discussed attracting additional Japanese tourists to Turkey and the possibility of additional

Turkish Airlines flights to Japan as ways to address this imbalance. While in Istanbul, Koizumi visited the Bosphorus tunnel currently under construction in which Japan is investing over USD 1 billion, as well as the already completed second Bosphorus bridge, representing over USD 500 million in Japanese investment.

Comment

17. (C) The fact that Turkish officials were eager to receive Koizumi during the Muslim Sacrifice Feast (Kurban Bayrami), the only time Koizumi could fit the visit on his schedule, is ample indication of the value Ankara places on the relationship with Japan. Officials noted this was only the second visit by a Japanese Prime Minister in the 115 years the two countries have enjoyed diplomatic relations.
End Comment.
WILSON